

October 2008 Access Workshops What We Heard

General Comments

- Decommission Priorities: potential wilderness areas, municipal watersheds, upstream of special biological areas, narrow areas with roads along ridgetops, administrative use roads that are deterrents to large blocks of unfragmented forest.
- Keep all hunter access roads open.
- No new ATV trails or OHV roads as these travelways are destructive of stream quality, fragment wildlife habitat and degrade wildlife habitat by noise and tend to divert money away from non-motorized trail maintenance.
- Roads built for timber harvest are over-engineered and cost more than the timber is worth. Roads can be built in a more cost-effective way. Marking higher grade timber and less low grade would help to make the road building more reasonable.
- Protect the Great Eastern Trail – this is an exciting opportunity!
- Build more roads into timber areas by creating less engineering and lower cost roads. Also creates access for hunters and hikers.
- The National Forests were started for timber production, then multiple use. The more areas that are made into roadless areas and wilderness areas contradict what the National Forest was intended for and what the purpose of the forest is today – multiple use.
- No more roadless areas. Roads are needed for the management of wildlife, timber and forest health.
- Strive to get open road density lower to get closer to goals that were set forth in 1993 plan. Goals and objectives set forth in that plan were fine.
- Decommission admin roads that in reality are overgrown trails and totally impassible.
- Would like to see greater emphasis on handicap accessibility in the way of parking area access to trails, etc.
- Group compatible uses. For example, combine areas with heavier timber harvests with heavier uses of motorized vehicles; concentrate trails on less accessible areas where timber harvests are impractical or less frequent.
- Set separate use trails to avoid user conflicts.
- Would like to see all of the MA 9 and 13 areas go to wilderness.
- Close and rehab all trails within designated wilderness areas. Need to keep these last areas wild and free from human degradation. Remove all signs and footbridges within wilderness areas permanently.
- Allowing for erosion and concerns for wildlife reproduction, can gated roads be opened when it isn't hunting season. Some of us can't walk as far.
- Is it possible to allow power tools for trail maintenance in wilderness areas in the event of catastrophes on a case by case basis?
- Reclassify Yellowstone Road from a Class A/B to D. This road does not go anywhere and it has no destinations. Seed the road and close it to year-round traffic, while leaving it accessible by foot.

- Would like to see more seasonal roads open longer to May or open year-round.
- Forestwide guidelines that we can use to organize information that might lead to constant use or historic roads/trails being added to the official trail inventory.
- Project to research and mark historic trails and roads across the forest – use volunteers to write about and make available to forest recreation users.

Warm Springs and James River

- Decommission FS Roads 279 and 175 and recommend Snake Run Ridge as a Research Natural Area.
- Keep the OHV trail open in Potts Mountain potential wilderness area. The Potts Run Jeep Trail is an old established jeep trail and money from the RTP grant was just accepted for repair. Not a good candidate for wilderness.
- Keep FS Road 362 seasonally open for hunting.
- Keep the OHV trail open in Oliver Mountain potential wilderness area. Another comment was that this is an illegal jeep road and that it should be tank trapped and closed this road as it causes significant erosion in both Hughes Draft creek and Lake Moomaw. It crosses Hughes Draft several times.
- Maintain the mountain bike access around Douthat State Park.
- No additional trails on the James River and Warm Springs Districts to allow for ecological processes. Don't let recreation trump ecology.
- Improve trails in Locust Springs – better marking and make more sustainable.
- Better parking areas for horse trailers

Pedlar

- Adams Peak area should not have any motorized trails. Benavitch reclaimed another trail in Adams Peak that is not showing up on the maps.
- Decommissioning opportunities – municipal watersheds such as that for Lynchburg Reservoir, N. Fork Shenandoah and Maury; brook trout watersheds to allow for fish passage.
- Roads should only be built for compelling needs for specific resources.
- We should monitor the amount of temporary road construction because of the impacts to fragmentation and effects from invasive species.
- The Appalachian Trail head at the Priest Wilderness is too small and needs signing.
- FS Road 162 between St Mary's North and Kelley Mountain potential wilderness areas is an important OHV road.
- Great area for expanding mountain biking trails at upper part of MA 9, north of FS Road 595.
- There is a need for horse trailer parking at a minimum and places for equestrians to camp in the Snowden area of Amherst County – more specifically at the end of FSR 36 (Rocky Row Run)

- There is a need for more loop trails for horseback riding on the Pedlar – participants in general identified existing old woods or logging roads that could be used for loop trails.
- Wilderness – Adams Peak area needs to become a wilderness – commenter disagrees with FS assessment that it would be difficult to achieve a sense of remoteness here. Mountain biking community adamantly opposes designation due to Whetstone Ridge trail (Trail #523).
- Mountain biking – a question was asked why there is not a local club to maintain trails around Buena Vista. Several gated roads were identified as good roads to ride.
- Three Sisters area – Would make a great wilderness.
- Coal Road Area/Bald Mtn Road – offroad club (Team X-Rated) is willing to create and maintain more OHV opportunities and seeing open OHV trails and roads open to non-street legal vehicles. Another person would like to see the middle road that is blocked off re-opened and made a more challenging road for OHVs. A more challenging area would help keep people on the trail and not destroying new land and creating new trails. Another person would like to keep Coal Road open and possibly reopen the old road that went through the center of Bald Mtn.
- Shoe Creek Area – would be a great area for an OHV area. Have met people there from Virginia Beach area just to ride on these trails. Currently Virginia has no designated area for a more extreme off-roading opportunity.
- Would like to see wet-weather mudholes on top of Peavine Mtn opened again to discourage damage in low areas of Peavine. Ever since they were filled in, damage has escalated in the low wet areas.
- Add loops in Dancing Creek; fix OHV road in Big Levels.
- Would like to see a trailhead at SR 812 Hercules Mine Road, horse trail parking area, only some trees need cutting. Move gate about 150' for horse trailer day parking.
- Would like to see SR 812 primitive camping on the right expanded for horse trailers.
- Would like to see all multiple use trails for horse access in Pedlar area with horse trailer parking areas.
- Mark all access trails for horse use.

North River

- Key Discussions: Items 1 thru 3 were key discussions. Items 4 thru 8 were mentioned as items of concern for specific individuals but not discussed at great length.
- Regularly / routinely open select roads that are normally closed so that the public can gather firewood. Firewood is scarce along open roads. Many closed roads have high concentrations of firewood along them. With firewood prices as high as they are there is a greater need for portions of the public to have access to firewood.
- Improve the Rocky Run OHV/ATV road system to provide a better experience. Improving this site will take pressure off other roads on the District.

- Develop an access point to the Rocky Run OHV/ATV road system off of State Route 33.
- Decommission FDR 235A (Root Run Road).
- Add an unclassified/unauthorized road in the Rocky Run drainage in the Hone Quarry area to the system.
- Continue to manage FDR 304 (Dry Run Road) as a seasonally open road.
- Connect the Second Mtn. ATV trail to the Second Mountain subdivision and reopen the gate, year round.
- Close & decommission FDR 85C (Puffenbarger Pond Road).
- FS Road 1594 – move the FS metal gate back from the road to make the area for parking trailers.
- Keep access for disabled hunters on FS Road 406 along Archer Knob potential wilderness area.
- Establish a connector trail where FS Road 393 ends at private land and FS Road 399E picks up on the other side of the private land along Jerkentight potential wilderness area.
- Establish a loop trail system in Crawford Knob potential wilderness area from the existing trail to FS Road 1761 at various places, parking area close to Route 250 and Churchill, using existing trails like Crawford Mtn and Chimney Hollow.
- Reopen Crawford Mtn Trail.
- Keep existing seasonal hunting roads as they are within Shenandoah Mtn area.
- Consider gating FS Road 85A on a seasonal basis (tremendous resource damage to wildlife clearings due to OHV use). Also road is in a Special Biological Area for Cow Knob salamander.
- Change the Seng Run road gate opening date from April 1 to Oct 1.
- Existing roads in High Knob potential wilderness area should be open and have high clearance sections integrated into them.
- Open FS Roads 427, 304 and 62 seasonally for hunting.
- Open an existing trail in the lower portion of Rocky Run ATV area to OHV high clearance.
- Decommission FS Road 235A into Beech Lick Knob potential wilderness area.
- Consider purchasing land to create a Great Eastern Trail corridor and reduce the road walk – in the area along US 250 in Hardy County.
- Create an equestrian trail system in the MA 22 area around FS Road 1279.
- Contiguous trail to get from Orkney Springs area south, to access trails south of Blue Hole area. Multiple use would be ideal.
- Connector trail between Wild Oak and River Rock, trail parallel to Tillman Road on west side connecting Wild Oak parking lot and Route 924. Trail would take the impact off Tillman Road and provide a full trail loop experience for the trails off Reddish Knob.
- Enlarge Narrowback Trail system to provide more low elevation green and blue trails on the forest edge in MA 16 around FS Road 536, east of Little River potential wilderness area.
- Trail to connect North River Campground to Todd Lake and Trimble Mtn Trail.
- Shared use trail to connect Braley to Camp Todd.

- Develop shared use trail system with access from 25 using existing sustainable trails and new trails, and old roads with sustainable alignment with at least a 5 mile loop in the MA 9 area around Crawford Knob.
- Look at short connecting trails to link roads and trails for multiple use.
- Connect FS Road 449 to the trail to make a loop.
- Add parking area to FS Road 901 and connect road to FS Road 536.
- Build Cork Mtn trail in Beech Lick Knob.
- Would like to see cooperating OHV clubs permitted to develop obstacles in the Second Mtn area. VA 4WD Assoc and other smaller clubs are willing to help maintain and monitor these areas. Have been working with the district on the Rocky Run section to close illegal activity.
- Would like to see increased access at Kephart Run to OHV high clearance use. Va 4WD Assoc willing to help.
- Like to see the trail north of Second Mtn open year round to allow OHV use when it is not hunting season.
- Would like to see Old Long opened up again.
- Would like to reopen Hone Quarry Mtn Road from the top of the mountain to Hone Quarry Dam. Remember riding on the road when young and have lived at the entrance of Hone Quarry Road for 26 years.
- Hone Quarry Road (62) open year-round. FS Road 43B open through 764 to Cook town.

Lee

- Join the end of Peterfish Road to Cub Run Road.
- Build a connector trail to connect Scothorn Gap with Crisman Hollow, up the ridge that goes north to Jawbone Gap. It would be a short trail that would make a nice loop opportunity.
- How about a Stephens Trail connector – it would go east off the ridge, and then there could be a north-south running trail, parallel with Mass East up on the ridge. Make a northern loop trail off of Stephen Trail, go up to the Massanutten East trail, take a left going north and then descend back down towards Fort Valley Road before Milford Gap. Go parallel with Ft Valley access Camp Roosevelt, then back to the gravel parking lot. Could allow families to take their children on a mountain bike ride without feeling overwhelmed right away. This would allow bikes, hikers and equestrians to make a loop and avoid the paved road that runs by the river.
- Make a connector trail from FS Road 1006 up to the ridge and Stephens Trail.
- Add a connector trail from FS Road 1318D to US 20.
- Limit roads, no new roads, especially for commercial development.
- Don't want to lose North Mountain Trail.
- Trout Pond Trail to go around the edge of campground.
- Figure out how to connect FS Roads 1857 and FS Road 1725 for a loop.
- Figure out how to connect FS 1857A with FS Road 93E/SR 601 for a loop.

- Lower basin trail from Elizabeth Furnace (Shaw Gap) staying on the bottom paralleling Passage Creek to the Buzzard Rock parking lot. This would relieve some of the heavier traffic and impact on existing trails. Another low basin trail could be Signal Knob area running parallel with Fort Valley Road.
- Trail connecting Strasburg Park to FS land.
- Connect Pontzer Gap to Fetzner Gap along the ridge.
- Maintenance on Doll Ridge and open to bicycles.
- It would be nice to have a footbridge over Passage Creek at the bottom of Sherman Gap Trail.
- Connect FS Roads 1863 and 809 along existing trail for OHV road.
- Parking at busy trailheads is often full on weekends. Could use more space at Half Moon Trail, North Mtn Trail at SR 691, Wolf Gap/Tibbets Knob and Little Stony Creek at FS Road 92.
- Can use an e-mail group → leedistrictcooperators@yahoo.com to coordinate volunteer work.
- Would like to see parking places for horse trailers at both ends of Cub Run Road.
- Would like to see the new road behind Catherine Furnace accessible for handicap hunters.
- Too many trails that do not correlate with the parking areas.